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ABSTRACT

Data from Kansas' 265 rural school districts from 1978-1979 through 1983-1984 revealed that there were 194 superintendent changes and 33 central office administrator changes during that period. Based on a total of 265 superintendencies and 46 central office administrator positions, the average number of superintendent changes per year was 32.33, with central office changes of 5.5 per year. Change as a percent of total change was 13% for superintendents and 12% for central office. A high of 44 total changes occurred in 1979-1980 with the low of 28 occurring in 1983-1984. A majority of districts maintained a high degree of stability; 113 districts retained the same superintendent all 6 years and 21 central office positions had no changes. Conversely, a minority of districts exhibited a volatile atmosphere: one district changed superintendents four times in 6 years, three districts changed superintendents every other year, and one changed central office administrators at the same rate. Economic conditions and declining enrollments (Kansas enrollments dropped 18.6% from 1971-1981) may affect the situation. Results are displayed as total changes by year and number of districts with changes from 1978-1984, from 1978-1980, and from 1981-1984. A list of districts included and a list of districts not included in the study are appended. (BRR)

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Turnover of Rural Kansas School Superintendents from 1978-1984

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Kansas represents the embodiment of rural America. It's two and one-half million people place it 32nd in population among the fifty states while 81,000 square miles make Kansas the thirteenth largest state in total land area. Most states and many metropolitan areas contain more people than the entire state of Kansas.

Three Kansas cities have more than 100,000 residents, however these three cities and their metropolitan areas contain over one-third of the population of the state. The remaining two-thirds are diffused over the small towns and rural areas that make up rural Kansas. Allowing for the populations of the three large metropolitan areas, Kansas population density is only nineteen persons per square mile. Actually, much of Kansas is even more sparsely populated than this, with 57 of it's 105 counties claiming a density of fewer than ten persons per square mile.

The scant number of people living in rural Kansas evoke characteristics that are common to rural areas. Most apparant of these characteristics is the limited access these areas maintain to business and comcercial facilities. Isolation from conveniently located restaurants, clothing stores, and movie theaters is the rule, not the exception. What city dwellers take for granted become luxuries when towns are few and far between.

Another quality that is characteristic of rural areas is the small rural schools that serve large geographic areas. The 305 public school

districts in Kansas served 386,387 students in 1984. By deducting the enrollments of Kansas' ten most populous counties an enrollment figure for rural Kansas can be determined. The 252 districts in the less populated counties of Kansas enroll 167,088 students. This gives rural Kansas districts a mean enrollment of 663 students.

Rural Turnover

The purpose of this study was to determine the amount of turnover by rural Kansas school superintendents and central office personnel.

Data was accumulated using information from the Kansas State Department of Education. The time span of the study was 1978 through 1984. Only districts with K-12 operations and maintaining less than 1,000 elementary students were included. The study involved 265 districts with enrollments ranging from about 2,000 students to less than 90. Changes were recorded for 265 superintendents and 46 central office personnel.

Base year for the study was the school year 1977-78. Superintendent turnover for the following six years was defined as any name change for the position. This included promotions from within the district as well as those from outside.

Results of the study are displayed in three ways including: Total superintendent changes by year; Number of districts with superintendent changes over six years; Superintendent changes in districts during the four year period 1981 to 1984 and the three year period 1978 to 1980. This information follows.

Table I

Number of Administrator Changes by Year

Year	Superintendents	Central Office	Total
Total Possible	265	46	311
1977-78	--	--	--
1978-79	33	7	40
1979-80	37	7	44
1980-81	40	3	43
1981-82	33	8	41
1982-83	26	5	31
1983-84	25	3	28
Total	194	33	
Average Number	32.33	5.5	
Overall Change as a Percent of Total	13%	12%	

Superintendent turnover could best be described as a curve which peaked in the year 1980-81. There appears to be a trend toward less turnover culminating in the final year of the study. The decrease from the high year to the low year is marked, showing fifteen fewer changes per year.

Central office turnover exhibits many of the same characteristics except that it peaks one year later and the peak is immediately preceded by a low year. Shown as a percent of the total number of positions, average change for superintendents is 13% compared to 12% for central office personnel.

Positions changes for superintendent and central office administrators may be influenced by a number of factors. Most notably, economic conditions affect the job market, both private and public. Indirectly, declining enrollments and school closings may affect turnover---Kansas enrollments dropped 18.6% from 1971-81---however no districts were closed during the course of this study.

The information in Table II shows a great deal of variance within Kansas regarding number of changes over six years.

Table II

Number of Kansas Districts with Administrator Changes by Administrator Category over a Six Year Period of Time (1977-1984)

Number of Changes	Superintendents	Central Office
0	113	21
1	112	20
2	36	4
3	3	1
4	1	0
5	0	0

A vast majority of districts maintain a high degree of stability in their central offices, both with superintendents and other central office administrators. One hundred-thirteen of the districts surveyed retained the same superintendent for the six years of the study. Twenty-one of the central office positions also showed no changes over the six

years. These numbers amount to over 40% of the positions showing no change.

The inclusion of districts that experienced only one change in six years reveals that 86% of the superintendents and 89% of the central office administrators experienced only one or no changes. Thus, in most cases superintendents and central office administrators enjoy a degree of stability in their positions.

Conversely, a minority of districts exhibited a volatile atmosphere for their superintendent and central office administrators. One district changed superintendents four times in the six years of the study. Three districts changed superintendents every other year while one changed central office administrators at the same rate. Thus, while the majority of districts are stable, a few experience a great deal of change, some changing every year.

Table III looks at district changes in districts for the four year period 1981-84. It reveals a trend toward more turnover in the last few years.

Table III

*Administrator Changes in Districts

During the Four Year Period 1981-84

Frequency of Number of Administrative Changes	Superintendent	Central Office
4 of 4 years	0	0
3 of 4 years	3	2
3 of 3 years	1	0
2 of 3 years	21	2
2 of 2 years	24	1

*Number of different administrators in the years 1981-84. Not the number of changes.

While no districts changed superintendents or central office administrators four of the last four years, one district changed superintendents and two changed central office administrators in all but one of the last four years.

More significant numbers surface with regard to number of different administators in two of the last three and two of the last two years. The first category (2 of the last 2 years) disclosed twenty-one superintendent changes and two central office administration changes. Even more significantly, twenty-four superintendents and one central office administrator marked changes in both of the last two years. Obviously, a number of districts are becoming more volatile.

The final table expressed the same information as Table III but for the years 1978-80.

Table IV

*Administrator Changes in Districts

During the Four Year Period 1978-80

Frequency of Number of Administrative Changes	Superintendent	Central Office
3 of 3 years	0	0
2 of 3 years	6	2
2 of 2 years	2	0

The data from Table IV, exhibits a rate of change for superintendent that is very low compared to the rate in Table III. Whereas twenty-one districts reported have new superintendents two of the last three years from 1981-84, only six experienced the same rate of change from 1978-80.

Central office administrator change was exactly the same (two) for the rate two of the last three years.

Districts changing superintendents both of the last two years showed an even greater increase from 1978-80 to 1981-84. Twenty-four districts changed superintendents two of the last two years in 1981-84 but only two districts changed at this rate during 1978-80. Central office administrators changed once at this rate from 1981-84 and not at all from 1978-80. If these numbers are a trend they represent a significant one, as the number of superintendents experiencing rapid turnover greatly increased in recent years.

Although this study reveals a great deal of change among superintendents, it raises many unanswered questions. Why do one in ten superintendencies and central office administrative positions turnover? How and why do these variables affect turnover? Why do the rates of change differ so much among different districts?

Answers to these questions would prove to be of great worth to the field of educational administration expecially in the area of superintendent training and preparation.

Appendix A

Kansas School Districts by Name Included in the Study

Abilene USD 435
Alma USD 329
Altoona-Midway USD 387
Andover USD 385
Anthony-Harper USD 361
Argonia Public Schools USD 359
Ashland USD 220
Atchinson County Community USD 377
Atchinson Public Schools USD 409
Attica USD 511
Atwood USD 318
Augusta USD 402
Axtell USD 488
B & B USD 451
Baldwin City USD 348
Barber County North USD 254
Barnes USD 233
Basehor-Linwood USD 458
Baxter Springs USD 508
Bazine USD 304
Belleville USD 427
Beloit USD 273
Blue Valley USD 384
Brewster USD 314
Brown County USD 430
Bucklin USD 459
Burlingame Public USD 454
Burlington USD 244
Burrton USD 369
Caldwell USD 360
Caney Valley USD 436
Canton-Galva USD 419
Cedar Vale USD 285
Central USD 462
Central Heights USD 288
Centre USD 397
Chapman USD 473
Chase USD 401
Chase County USD 284
Chautauqua County USD 286
Cheney USD 268
Cherokee USD 247
Cherryvale USD 477
Chetopa USD 505
Cheylin USD 103
Cimarron-Ensign USD 102
Circle USD 375
Claflin USD 354

Clearwater USD 264
Colby USD 315
Columbus USD 493
Comanche County USD 300
Concordia USD 333
Conway Springs SDU 356
Copeland USD 476
Council Grove USD 417
Crest USD 479
Cuba USD 455
Cunningham USD 332
Deerfield USD 216
DeSoto USD 232
Dexter USD 471
Dighton USD 482
Douglas Public Schools USD 396
Eastern Heights USD 324
Easton USD 449
Elk Valley USD 283
Elkhart USD 218
Ell-Saline USD 307
Ellinwood USD 355
Ellis USD 388
Ellsworth USD 327
Elwood USD 486
Erie-St. Paul USD 101
Eudora USD 491
Eureka USD 389
Fairfield USD 310
Flinthills USD 492
Ft. Larned USD 495
Fort Scott USD 234
Fowler USD 225
Fredonia USD 484
Frontenac USD 249
Galena USD 499
Garnett USD 365
Girard USD 248
Goddard USD 265
Goessel USD 411
Golden Plains USD 316
Goodland USD 352
Grainfield USD 292
Greeley County USD 200
Greensburg USD 422
Grinnell USD 291
Halstead USD 440
Hamilton USD 390
Hanston USD 228
Haven USD 312

Haviland USD 474
Healy USD 468
Herington USD 487
Herndon USD 317
Hesston USD 460
Hiawatha USD 415
Highland USD 425
Hill City USD 281
Hillsboro-Durham-Lehigh USD 410
Hoisington USD 431
Holcomb USD 363
Holton USD 336
Hoxie Community Schools USD 412
Hugoton USD 210
Humboldt USD 258
Ingalls USD 477
Inman USD 488
Jackson Heights USD 335
Jayhawk USD 346
Jefferson County North USD 339
Jefferson West USD 340
Jetmore USD 227
Jewell USD 279
Kaw Valley USD 321
Kingman USD 331
Kinsley-Offerle USD 347
Kismet-Plains USD 483
Labette County USD 506
LaCrosse USD 395
Lakin USD 215
Lansing USD 469
Lebanon USD 236
Lebo-Waverly USD 243
Leon USD 205
Leoti USD 467
LeRoy-Gridley USD 245
Lewis USD 502
Lincoln USD 298
Lindsborg USD 400
Little River USD 444
Logan USD 326
Lorraine USD 328
Louisburg USD 416
Lyndon USD 421
Lyons USD 405
Macksville USD 351
Madison-Virgil USD 386
Maize USD 266
Mankato USD 278
Marais Des Cygnes Valley USD 456
Marion USD 408

Marmaton Valley USD 256
Marysville USD 364
Mayetta USD 337
McLouth USD 342
McPherson USD 418
Meade USD 266
Midway USD 433
Minneola USD 219
Montezuma USD 371
Moscow USD 209
Moundridge USD 423
Mullinville USD 424
Mulvane USD 263
Nemaha Valley USD 442
Neodesha USD 461
Nes Tre La Go USD 301
Ness City USD 303
Newton 369
Nickerson USD 309
North Central USD 221
North Lyon County USD 251
North Ottawa County USD 239
Northeast USD 246
Northern Valley USD 212
Norton USD 211
Oakley USD 274
Oberlin USD 294
Onaga-Havensville-Wheaton USD 322
Osage City USD 420
Osawatomie USD 367
Osborne County USD 392
Oskaloosa USD 341
Oswego USD 504
Otis-Bison USD 403
Ottawa USD 290
Oxford USD 358
Palco USD 269
Paola USD 368
Paradise USD 399
Peabody-Burns USD 398
Perry USD 343
Phillipsburg USD 325
Pike Valley USD 426
Piper USD 203
Plainville USD 270
Pleasanton USD 344
Prairie Heights USD 295
Prairie View USD 362
Pratt USD 382
Pretty Prairie USD 311
Quinter USD 293
Remington-Whitewater USD 206
Renwick USD 267
Republican Valley USD 224

Riley County USD 378
Riverton USD 404
Rolla USD 217
Rose Hill USD 394
Rozel USD 496
Rural Vista USD 481
Russell County USD 407
Sabetha USD 441
St. Francis Schools USD 297
St. John USD 350
Santa Fe Trail USD 434
Satanta USD 507
Scott County USD 466
Sedwick Public Schools USD 439
Silver Lake USD 372
Skyline USD 438
Smith Center USD 237
Smoky Hill USD 302
Solomon USD 393
South Barber Co. USD 255
South Haven USD 509
Southeast of Saline USD 306
Southern Cloud County USD 334
Southern Lyon County USD 252
Spearville USD 381
Spring Hill USD 230
Stafford USD 349
Stanton Co. USD 452
Sterling USD 376
Stockton USD 271
Sublette USD 374
Sylvan Grove USD 299
Syracuse USD 494
Tonganoxie USD 464
Triplains USD 275
Troy USD 429
Twin Valley USD 240
Udall USD 463
Uniontown USD 235
Valley Center USD 262
Valley Falls USD 338
Valley Heights USD 498
Vermillion USD 380
Victoria USD 432
Wabaunsee East USD 330
Waconda USD 272
WaKeeney USD 208
Wallace County Schools USD 241
Wamego USD 320

Washington USD 222
Wathena USD 406
Wellington USD 353
Wellsville USD 289
Waskan USD 242
West Elk USD 282
West Franklin USD 287
West Graham-Moreland USD 280
West Smith County USD 238
West Solomon Valley USD 213
Westmoreland USD 323
White Rock USD 104

Appendix B

Kansas School Districts by Name Not Included in the Study

Arkansas City USD 470
Auburn-Washburn USD 437
Blue Valley USD 229
Bonner Springs USD 204
Buhler USD 313
Chanute Public Schools USD 413
Clay Center USD 379
Coffeyville USD 445
Derby USD 260
Dodge City USD 443
El Dorado USD 490
Emporia USD 253
Ft. Leavenworth USD 207
Garden City USD 457
Gardner USD 231
Great Bend USD 428
Hays USD 489
Haysville USD 261
Hutchinson USD 308
Independence USD 446
Iola USD 257
Junction City USD 475
Lawrence USD 497
Leavenworth USD 453
Liberal USD 480
Manhattan USD 383
Newton USD 373
Olathe USD 233
Pittsburg USD 250
Salina USD 305
Seaman USD 345
Shawnee Heights USD 450
Shawnee Mission USD 512
Topeka Public Schools USD 501
Turner USD 202
Ulysses USD 214
Wichita USD 259
Winfield USD 465